

Novelty Era Jewelry

By Sherry Winkinhofer, Northwest Missouri Model A Ford Club

Most of the time, when we are talking about jewelry from the Model A years, we talk about the beautiful or elegant pieces. Diamonds or rhinestones, gems or colored glass, silver or gold, things with what in our modern world is often referred to as “Bling.” And the pictures and catalogs of the era are filled with these types of ornaments, to be sure.

But an interesting sub-set of jewelry that has always fascinated me is what was often referred to as novelty items. Some catalogs have items titled novelty that are just unusual styles but are still considered elegant. This article is not about those, but about the other pieces, those that wouldn't normally pop into our minds when asked about era jewelry. Things with subjects of animals or sports themes, fantasy items such as dragons and griffins, or even popular cultural themes such as airplanes. These unique items could be found as any type of jewelry, including brooches, hat pins, bracelets, and cuff links. Finding real life photos of these small pieces of history being worn is difficult, but catalogs help fill in the gaps.

Animals were a popular subject. Dogs, horses, turtles, and elephants were quite easy to find. Less common, but still out there, were parrots, owls, monkeys and even dragons and snakes! Here are a few examples:

Dogs were a popular motif:



Montgomery Ward Fall and Winter 1928-29 - dog novelty pin



Daniel Low 1930 - dog pins



Lane Bryant Fall and Winter 1928-1929—metal animal pin on hat.



Novelty pins for hats - The Charles William Stores Inc Spring and Summer 1928.



Lane Bryant Fall and Winter 1928-1929 “held by one of those good-looking metal animal pins that are so popular now.”



Illustrated Ford Dearborn Gift Book—Sport Tie Holder.



Chas. L. Trout Co 1931 catalog - dog pin

Birds of a feather flock together, and that is true for some of these pieces.



1930 Jason Weiler-Baird North Co—Owl brooch.



1930 Daniel Low—Redbird hat ornament.

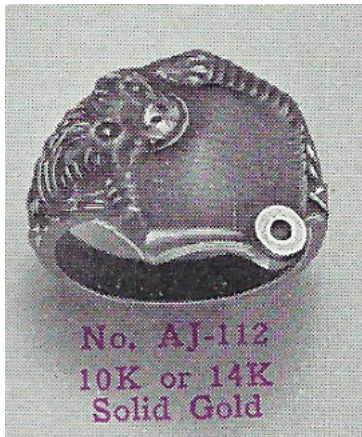


1930 Bellas Hess – Love Bird pin.



Daniel Low 1930—Parrot on perch.

Monkeys, turtles, elephants, camels, and snakes make appearances in many era jewelry catalogs. Even mythical creatures such as dragons and chimeras could be found.



No. AJ-112
10K or 14K
Solid Gold

Men's rings Japanese signet tokens - Keen's Diamond Merchants 1928. Other animals and mythical creatures were also options, and the round opening at the bottom right is for a diamond!

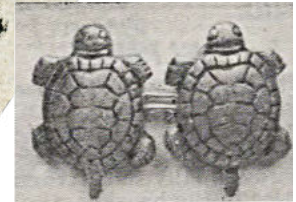


Chas. L. Trout Co 1931—Monkey dangle brooch. Simulated Ruby eyes.



P2321 1.00
Cunning turtle bracelet in silver finish.
With jade in turtles backs.
P2322 1.75

Shown $\frac{1}{2}$ size



Jason Weiler-Baird North Co 1930—Turtle cufflinks, and a turtle bracelet.

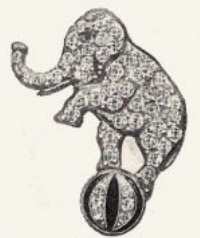


Illustrated Ford Dearborn Gift Book—Sport Tie Holder featuring palm trees and a camel.



Interesting Cloisonne Enamel Bracelet that has a popular demand. Finely modeled black enamel elephants on jade green enamel background. Sterling silver. P2222 4.00

Daniel Low 1930—Cloisonne bracelet with elephants.



A10721—Stone set hat ornament, enamel...\$2.00

Baird North 1928 - Elephant hat ornament



Tribuaudeau Factory catalog, from France, 1929—Yellow gold snake ring, with ruby or sapphire eyes.

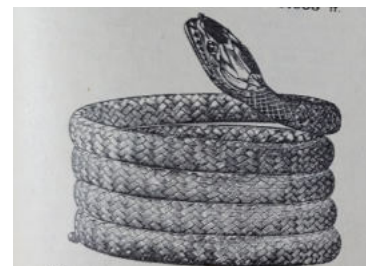


2379. Bracelet serpent en or jaune, cabochon saphir fin. 1.250 fr.



3373. Bracelet serpent, teinte or jaune, peau de crocodile, 2 pierres couleur serties, saphirs, rubis ou émeraudes. 40 fr.

A collection of snake bracelets were available from the Tribuaudeau Factory catalog, 1929—Yellow gold, green gold, and matte gold, with sapphire or ruby eyes in some.



This multi-coil bracelet from the Tribuaudeau Factory catalog, 1929 could be purchased with 2 or 4 coils, and with or without gemstone eyes.

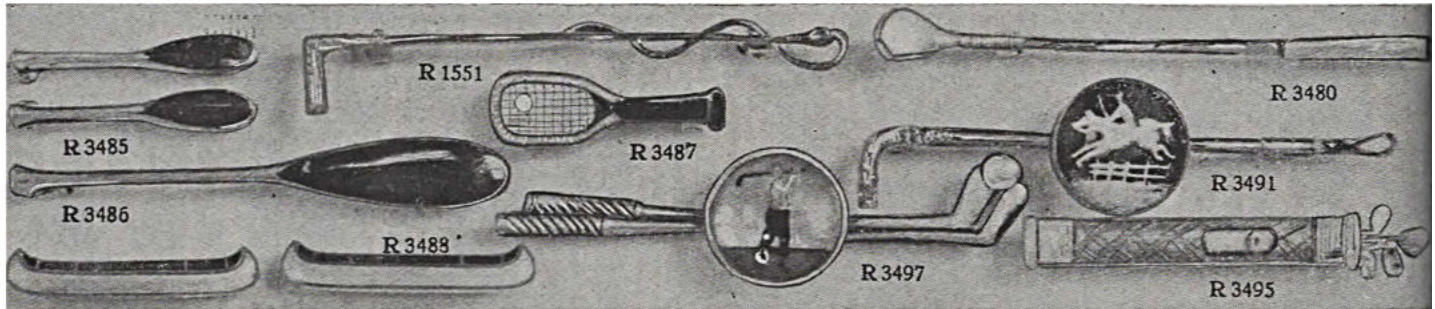


Daniel Low 1930—Dragon pin



Tribuaudeau Factory catalog, 1929—Pocket watches with dragons, griffins, and chimeras.

Sports themed items were easy to find. These include golf, tennis, riding and racing, and hunting, as can be seen in the items below:



Daniel Low 1928—A selection of sports pins.



1931 Illustrated Ford Dearborn Gift Book—Hunting Dog with duck pocketknife.

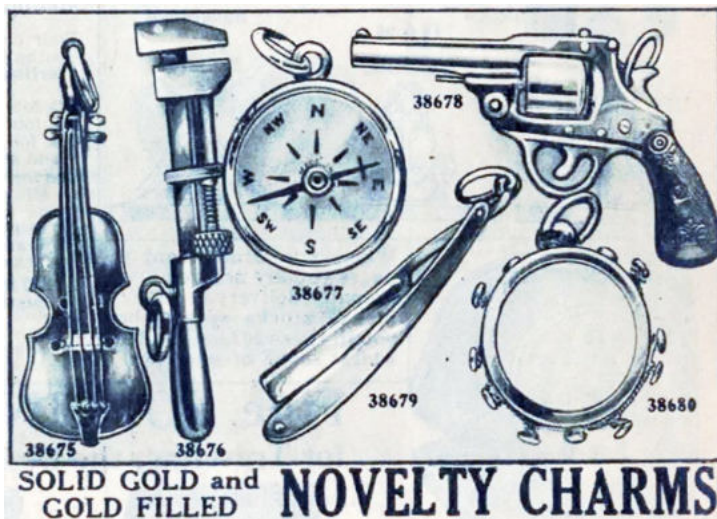


Tribuadeau Factory catalog, 1929 —Pocket watch with horse design.

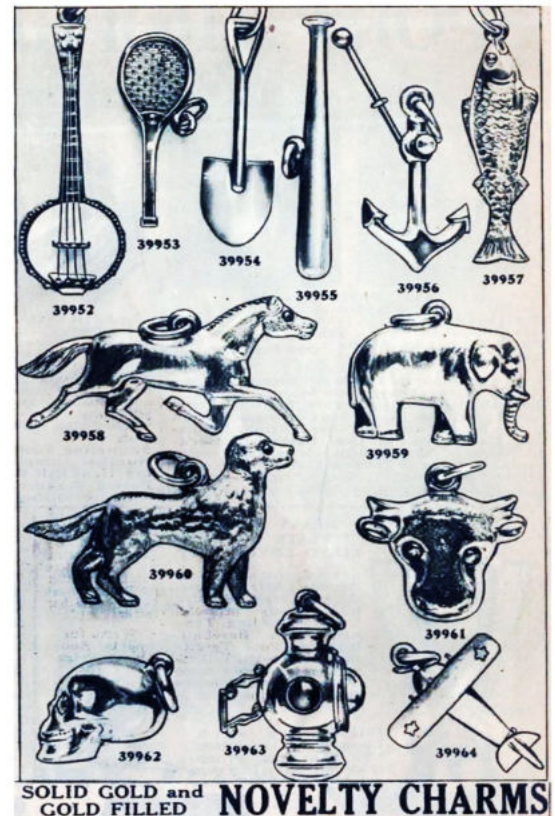


Daniel Low 1930—Sterling silver belt buckle, available with golf, baseball or tennis figure.

Jewelry catalogs were full of various charms. Not for charm bracelets, instead, they were used on watch chains! Any hobby or vocation could be represented with a charm.



1930 Jason Weiler-Baird North Co novelty charms



1930 Jason Weiler-Baird North Co novelty charms



Dual airplane hat pin—Loretta Young 1929

Airplanes were a novelty in real life so of course they captivated ladies as jewelry.



Illustrated Ford Dearborn Gift Book—
Propeller pin with wings.



1930 Bellas Hess— Airplane pin



1930 Jason Weiler-Baird North Co –
"Aeroplane" in sterling silver

A few more of my favorite finds:



1930 Jason Weiler-Baird North Co -
Kewpie ring



Sears & Roebuck
1930—penguins—
Wings Over the
Pole.



1928 Bellas Hess jester or clown hat pin

Just to be clear, it seems that these whimsical pieces were likely not found in large numbers. However enough of them can be found to document that people in the Model A era still had a sense of fun. The above examples include costume jewelry and fine jewelry with diamonds, gemstones and platinum and other precious metals. So, no matter what your budget and style, don't be afraid to shakeup your jewelry box and add a playful touch to your era fashion!

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